Socialist Worker

Mater and Beaumount show the Way

DEFEND THE HEALTH SERVICE

Nurses in the Mater and Beaumount should be congratulated for protesting against the disgraceful conditions in the health service.Nurses in the Mater casualty department rightly went on strike to protest over their working conditions. Beaumount is taking similar action on April 5th, the Meath is also taking a ballot on the issue.

The set up in the casualty department is both stressful for the nurses and dangerous for the patients. Patients who arrive can be made to lie on trolleys and even on the floors for up to 48 hours before a bed is found for them. Up to 22 people can be kept in this way because of this lack of resources. The nurses involved have made viable suggestions to help the problem and free more beds. They know more about how the hospitals should work than the bureaucrats who refuse to listen to them.

Nurses should know that they have massive support from the public. Hundreds of petitions have been filled in support of any further actions they take. The possibilities for building bigger protests are great. We should take the example of the Nurses in the North who called a day of action with the slogan "Defend the NHS!". Nurses should call on the INO to call a protest against the conditions.Other hospital workers will support the action. Unity and solidarity are the only way that we can fight for a better Health service.

The long promised Tallaght hospital was shelved for years becuase the country "couldn't afford it". Hospitals like the Mater are forced to collect money in nearby shops, to suffer apalling conditions because the government won't give enough . Yet Ruari Quinn could afford to give £35 million in tax breaks for the Banks. As long as we live in a system that puts profits before people the workers in the hospitals willl face further attacks on conditions.

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